

RE: HB 5425

Dear Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee,

I am opposed to HB 5425 sec. 3 (d) (1) shifting the burden of proof to the filing party in a due process hearing. I am the parent of a child that requires special education. My child is entitled to a free and appropriate education, FAPE, but the appropriateness can be a matter of dispute between school and parent. Parents file special education hearings as a last resort after exhausting every means to find a workable solution. We must shoulder the cost of hiring an attorney, in addition, to locating and hiring our own expert witnesses. The school districts are privileged to have their own attorneys with unlimited resources. They have access to records, school personnel and experts witnesses to defend the appropriateness of their programs. The process is not evenly balanced and difficult for parents financially and emotionally. Resources are not readily available and free to parents. The proposed regulation would create an additional financial hardship that parents could not possibly afford. Please vote NO!

Thank you,

Charlyne Olko  
Enfield